

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

FILE

HASC

May 2, 1989

The Honorable Dan Quayle  
Vice President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President,

In his testimony before the House Armed Services Committee April 25, Defense Secretary Cheney revealed his plan to place the National Aerospace Plane (NASP) and \$100 million in DoD funds under the exclusive jurisdiction of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. NASA officials have made it clear that withdrawal of DoD support for NASP would ultimately kill the program.

Secretary Cheney also revealed that the National Space Council, which you chair, will review future funding and administrative questions that currently surround the NASP. Knowing of your keen interest in U.S. space technology, we are joining in this expression of our active support for continued joint agency funding of NASP as an experimental research vehicle with equal value as a civilian or military system. In concluding that NASP is strictly a civilian aviation program, the Department of Defense has failed to recognize that the aero-space plane is a technology that promises national security means well into the 21st century.

The National Aerospace Plane is a natural product of our intense need to return to the forefront of space technology. It is an idea almost universally viewed with enthusiasm by the civil, military and industrial world. The U.S. NASP research and development program has already drawn an incredible investment of over \$700 million from a consortium of private industries. It is the envy of all other industrial nations. The Japanese have identified aero-space plane research as the means to becoming "the world's premier manufacturer of composite materials and advanced propulsion systems".

The debate over Department of Defense participation in NASP research and development is mindful of the post-World War II era when some very hard lessons were well understood by General Marshall, Secretary Forrestal, and Air Force Chiefs Vandenberg and White. The Congress shared their understanding of those hard lessons: that the strength of the nation rested in the muscle of

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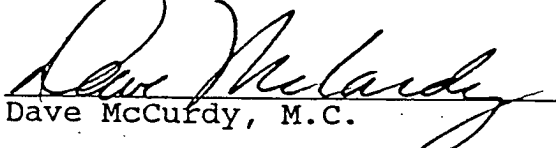
its weapons technology and the foresight of its leaders. Out of that experience came an unparalleled Air Force of B-52s and Mach 2 fighters and visions of a growing technical base to sustain our strength.

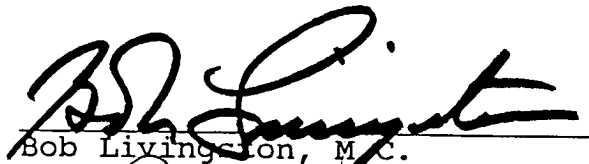
However, Defense Secretary McNamara cancelled that emerging technology. He placed our research advances on hold. Pressed by budget constraints, he led decisions to refurbish old technologies rather than develop new ones. Thirty years later, we have the same Air Force of B-52s, Mach 2 fighters and 1950s technology.

Mr. Vice President, it is with utmost urgency that we express our support for a sustained government commitment to NASP. As Vice President, as Chairman of the National Space Council and as one who advocates U.S. competitiveness in the world, you have a key role in U.S. technological development. To cancel the National Aerospace Plane in 1990 is to ensure our technological mediocrity beyond.

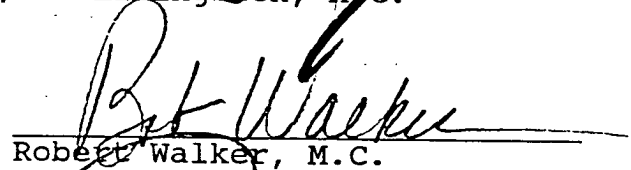
Thank you for your valued leadership on this vital issue.

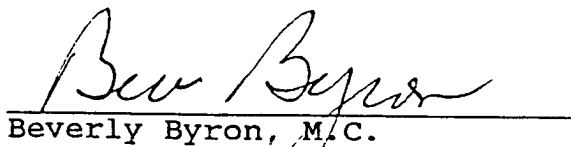
Sincerely,

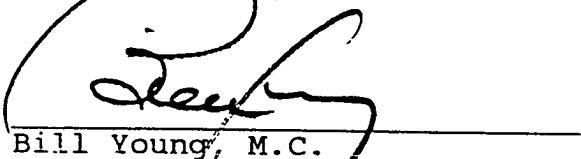
  
Dave McCurdy, M.C.

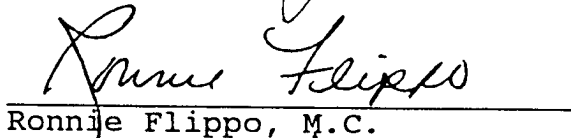
  
Bob Livingston, M.C.

  
Robert A. Roe, M.C.

  
Robert Walker, M.C.

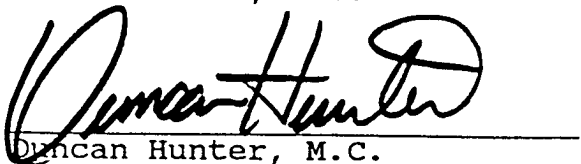
  
Beverly Byron, M.C.


  
Bill Young, M.C.

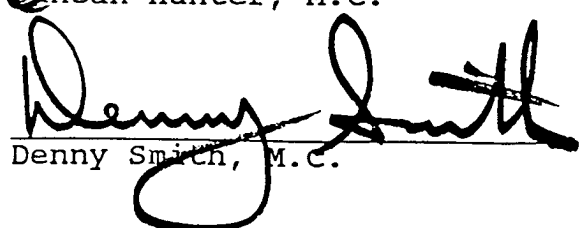
  
Ronnie Flippo, M.C.

  
Robert Davis, M.C.

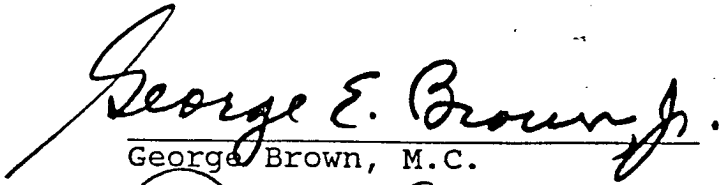
  
Tim Valentine, M.C.

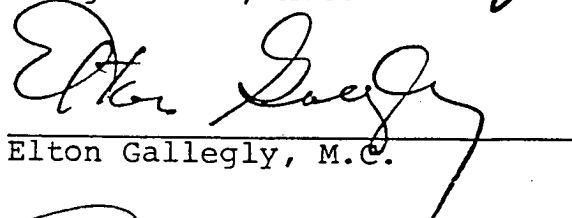
  
Duncan Hunter, M.C.

  
Dan Glickman, M.C.

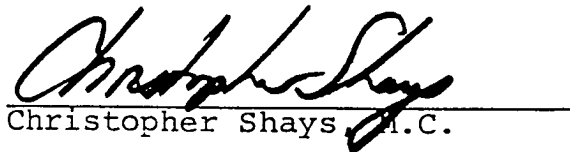
  
Denny Smith, M.C.

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George Brown, M.C.

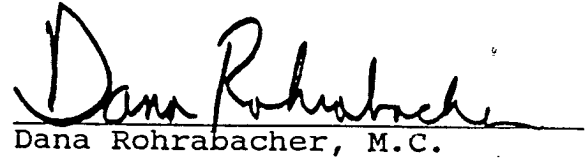
  
Elton Gallegly, M.C.

  
James Inhofe, M.C.

  
Christopher Shays, M.C.

  
Jack Buechner, M.C.

  
Tom Lewis, M.C.

  
Dana Rohrabacher, M.C.